

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the Lowey-Greenwood motion to strike section 587, relating to the global gag rule and limiting vital U.S. assistance for voluntary international family planning.

I am a firm believer in voluntary international family planning. Let me make this clear. International family planning prevents abortions. I do not think anyone can dispute that.

The global gag rule is dangerous because it prevents U.S. funds from reaching critical health care providers in developing nations and dictates how these NGOs can spend funds from other donors besides the U.S. government. We have every right to decide policy for U.S. funds, but not for other nations and private donors. In fact, no U.S. dollars can be used to perform abortions overseas.

Mr. Chairman, I support this prohibition. It is up to the governments and citizens in these nations to decide their own policies. In Malawi, in sub-Saharan Africa, which I recently visited, I witnessed how villagers from miles around used one central health care facility for all of their needs. These people have no options.

If the U.S. fails to fund them, they cannot use the hospital down the road. This is literally one-stop health care shopping with no alternatives. If it is not funded, women will have no access to contraception or any other health care and neither will their families.

Mr. Chairman, I am also opposed to the global gag rule because it is patently undemocratic. If such restrictions were placed on NGOs here, they would be a clear violation of the first amendment.

How can we claim to export democracy when we export limitations on free speech? Mr. Chairman, this is no compromise. This is legislation placed into an appropriations measure, despite the Republican leadership's claim that they would accept no controversial riders.

Mr. Chairman, I think the number of Members on the floor today clearly demonstrates the controversy surrounding this issue. And to call it a compromise when it took holding vital U.N. funding hostage, placing U.S. national security at risk to get the administration to let it in is disingenuous, misleading and downright preposterous.

Mr. Chairman, I urge my colleagues to support the Lowey-Greenwood amendment.

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Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3¾ minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WELDON).

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for yielding me this time.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to this amendment and any amendment that would strike the agreed-upon language in section 587 of the Foreign Operations appropriations bill.

Last fall, for the first time during his term, the President signed legislation to restrict the use of United States taxpayer dollars to groups that perform or promote abortions overseas. This version of the so-called "Mexico City policy" allowed no more than \$15 million of United States population assistance funds to go to foreign organizations that promote or perform abortions overseas.

This amendment proposed today would strip that language that the President signed into law last year and allow almost unlimited United States taxpayer subsidies of the international abortion industry.

Now, I know my colleagues on the other side are fond of saying that no United States dollar goes to that purpose, but as we all know, that is an accounting maneuver. This is just another attempt by the pro-abortion side, I believe, to promote their agenda and to create, furthermore, gridlock over this contentious issue of funding for international abortion-related organizations.

The language that this amendment seeks to strike was agreed upon by both sides last year to resolve a stalemate. Unfortunately, the pro-abortion side is unwilling to accept anything other than a total victory for the international abortion industry.

What my colleagues will not acknowledge is that section 587 does not weaken international family planning programs. Rather, it strengthens them by ensuring that United States funds are directed to those groups that provide family planning but not to those who perform abortions or promote abortion as a form of birth control.

Furthermore, it would restrict funding to those organizations that seek to overturn the pro-life laws of more than 100 countries overseas, clearly something that the vast majority of United States taxpayers do not want to see their taxpayer funds being used for.

Abortion is not birth control, and the taxpayers should not be forced to pay for it.

This is a bad amendment, and I encourage my colleagues to vote against it and any other amendment that threatens the language now included in the Foreign Operations appropriations bill.

It has been said that some of the people on this side of this argument are motivated primarily by religious arguments. As a physician who has personally witnessed an abortion, I do not know how anybody could support abortion after actually seeing one with their eyes. I do not think this is a religious debate. It is certainly a moral debate. It is certainly a debate about what is the appropriate use of United States taxpayer dollars when one considers that millions of Americans feel very strongly that abortion is murder, that this is a very, very reasonable policy for us to have in the bill, and that it is very inappropriate for it to be overturned.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, striking this language would be a victory for women and children and democracy around the world.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), a fighter for democracy.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Chairman, first, let me just thank the gentlewoman from New York for yielding me this time and for her strong leadership on behalf of the families throughout the world.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of this amendment today to strike the global gag rule which denies United States family planning assistance to any overseas organization that uses its own non-United States funds to provide abortion services or reproductive choice advocacy.

Approximately 600,000 women die each year from preventable complications related to pregnancy and childbirth. Complications are the leading cause of death and disability among women between the ages of 15 to 49 in developing countries.

Now, most of these women are poor, and many have infectious diseases such as HIV or AIDS and are struggling just to survive day by day.

Now, this amendment does not require United States foreign aid funds to be used for abortions. Women throughout the world should have fundamental access to health care and family planning services and health education.

Support for this amendment means saving lives, promoting women's and children's health. To do less is fundamentally undemocratic and morally wrong.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair would inform Members that the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) has 10¼ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) has 2½ minutes remaining. The gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY) has 5 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) has the right to close debate.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT).

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment, which would undermine the values in human rights in other countries.

Our current law is designed to prevent taxpayer funds from being used to undermine the values of foreign families by subsidizing organizations which work to undermine pro-life laws that are already in place. This proposed amendment would change this good law.

As legislators, we have the tremendous responsibility of being in charge of other people's money. The dollars we spend do not belong to us. They are the result of hard work of people throughout this land. How we spend these dollars is a decision which is entrusted to us with the effects reaching all around the globe.